



Testimony to the Human Services Committee  
March 12, 2015  
By Leslie Simoes, Executive Director

**Testimony: Raised Bill 6465 AN ACT CONCERNING STATE CONTRACTS FOR HUMAN SERVICES.**

Good afternoon Senator Moore, Representative Abercrombie and members of the Human Services Committee. My name is Leslie Simoes and I am the executive director of The Arc Connecticut. Arc Connecticut is a 62-year old advocacy organization committed to protecting the basic civil basic rights of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and to promoting opportunities for their full inclusion in the life of their communities. We have 18 chapters across Connecticut providing direct support and services. We rose from grass roots advocacy and have hundreds of families and individuals with disabilities in our Arc family. Because we are driven by a philosophy that every person should be as independent as possible, Arcs across the state walk with people toward greater autonomy, saving millions of taxpayer dollars each year.

I am here today to offer The Arc's support for H.B. 6947, An Act Concerning State Contracts for Human Services. Our private non-profit provider system of support is crumbling as a result of continued underfunding and slow starvation of resources making the simple tasks our missions drive us to do more and more difficult. This bill would require OPM to review reimbursement rates every two years and adjust rates to reflect changes in inflation and Consumer Price Index (CPI) growth and would essentially create an 'automatic' cost of living adjustment if prices go up.

Thousands of families across Connecticut rely on the vital supports and services our provider system deliver but the chronic underfunding for over 20 years has created huge gaps in supports for our families. Providers of I/DD services want to say "yes" to families but are being forced to say "no, not right now" or worse yet, "no, not ever".

Our providers have not had increases in over 20 years and have been the recipients of many cuts especially in the past 2 years. And now The Governor tells us our state has no money and must cut us yet again. But I'd like to point out that even when Connecticut HAD money, they never gave it to us. Our providers did not cause the deficit and we have been giving back year after year after year. Our workers have been giving back year after year after year. Our families receive less and less and ultimately it is the individuals with disabilities that loose the most.

The deficit is an excuse. We believe that if fully funding the provider system were a priority it would be funded. This legislation sends a strong message that our families and their children and adult children with disabilities matter because supporting those that meet their needs everyday will once and for all be a priority.

Please, I urge you to vote in favor of this bill and ask you to review and share the CT Nonprofit Alliance report and Connecticut Community Providers Association Prioritizing Community Based Services in CT that explains why Connecticut can't afford to NOT invest in the nonprofit, community provider system..

Please do not hesitate to contact me with questions, for clarification or to arrange a visit with a private provider of community based services for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities in you area. Thank you for your time and consideration.

43 Woodland Street, Suite 260  
Hartford, CT 06105

(860) 246-6400 x101

lsimoes@arcofct.org

[www.thearcct.org](http://www.thearcct.org)